



# 2015 White House Tribal Youth Gathering

Executive Office of the President

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**On July 9, 2015, more than 1,000 American Indian and Alaska Native youth—representing 42 states and 230 tribes—attended a White House event to discuss key issues in the lives of Native youth. In addition to youth who attended in person, others were able to participate remotely through the 65 watch parties that took place across the nation. Discussions took place in breakout sessions in which participants were asked to give feedback to Administration officials. What follows is a high-level summary of the discussions among the youth participants and Federal and non-profit officials.**

**We would like to thank United National Indian Tribal Youth, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of Justice for their support of the inaugural White House Tribal Youth Gathering.**

**We would also like to thank the future of Indian Country: the more than 1,000 Native American youth who attended this event as well as those who participated in over 65 watch parties across the country. We look forward to our continued collaboration and dialogue.**

**We look forward to our continued collaboration and dialogue across the federal government in partnership with Indian Country and organizations dedicated to improving the lives of Native youth.**

**Disclaimer:** Summaries of the main themes and topics raised by the youth who attended the break-out sessions are included in this report. This readout serves as a record of some of the issues raised at each session. It does not necessarily reflect the views of all participants or the policy positions of the Obama Administration.

# BREAK-OUT SESSIONS

## Emerging Youth Leaders

### Breakout Panelists:

#### Session 1:

**Vanita Gupta**, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division, DOJ

**Laura Harris**, Executive Director, Americans for Indian Opportunity

**Mary Kim Titla**, Executive Director, United National Indian Tribal Youth

#### Session 2:

**Erin Bailey**, Executive Director, Center for Native American Youth

**Jill Eichner**, Office of General Counsel, Department of Education

**Broderick Johnson**, Assistant to the President and Cabinet Secretary

**Karol Mason**, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, DOJ

### Breakout Moderators:

#### Session 1:

**Stephine Poston**, Americans for Indian Opportunity

**Brittany Simmons**, American for Indian Opportunity

#### Session 2:

**Josie Raphaelito**, Program Manager, Center for Native American Youth

**Michael Smith**, Special Assistant to the President, My Brother's Keeper

### Discussion:

#### *When I think of youth leadership development, I think of . . .*

- Supporting peers and uplifting them
- Identity
- Traditions
- Language

- Pride
- Better communication
- Needing to know when to ask for help

#### *What I would like to see happen is . . .*

##### **Community:**

- Increased communication with elders
- Additional inter-tribal connections
- Additional support for Native youth in foster care
- Additional leadership opportunities in the school system
- Increased funding and more resources for youth programs
- Reduced use of drugs and alcohol

- Youth with a greater understanding of their own identity

##### **Nation:**

- Thorough history in textbooks
- Reduced ignorance among non-Natives
- Change in stereotypes
- Better balance of western and Native identity
- Increased awareness about opportunities
- The continuation of the WH Tribal Youth Gathering

## Beyond High School – Post-Secondary Education

### Breakout Panelists:

**Ann Marie Bledsoe Downes**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Economic Development, DOI

**Lance Matthiesen**, Vice President, Institutional Partnerships, Management Leadership for Tomorrow

**Helen Lowman**, Associate Director of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Peace Corps

**Roberto Rodriguez**, Deputy Assistant to the President for Education

**Joyce Silverthorne**, Director, Office of Indian Education, Department of Education

### Breakout Moderators:

**Fredericka Joseph**, BIA Youth Coordinator, DOI

**Leslie Wheelock**, Director, Office of Tribal Relations, USDA

### Discussion:

#### *When I think about post-secondary education, I think of . . .*

- Reduced opportunities to attend college
- Desire to stay close to community
- Cost/Scholarships
- Question ourselves
- Support group
- Needed guidance:
  - Selecting college
  - Application process
  - Classes
  - Internships
- Some students feel like they are not good enough to go to college

#### *What I would like to see . . .*

- People encouraging members to return to communities after they go to college
- Increased options for local education
- A variety of college readiness classes
- Increased awareness of scholarships or internships
- University-style community colleges
- College Fairs
- Guidance for your advisor
- Universities need more Native American affinity groups

## Education – Our Schools, Our Curriculum, Our Success

### Breakout Panelists:

**Dan Greenspahn**, Staff Attorney, Office of Civil Rights, Department of Education

**Monty Roessel**, Director of the Bureau of Indian Education, DOI

**Bill Mendoza**, Executive Director of the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education

**Eric Waldo**, Executive Director of First Lady Michelle Obama’s Reach Higher Initiative

### Breakout Moderators:

**Sedelta Oosahwee**, Associate Director, White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education

**Joy Silvern**, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy and Programs, Department of Education

### Discussion:

#### *When I think about K-12 education, I think of . . .*

- Standardized testing
- Inadequate representation of Native American history
- Need to talk about contemporary Native Americans
- Lack of resources
- Students with disabilities are not getting diagnosed soon enough
- School to Prison pipeline

#### *What I would like to see happen is . . .*

- Youth provided with more resources
- Culture shared with non-Natives
- Zero tolerance for cultural appropriation
- Increased advocacy for students
- Teachers go through cultural sensitivity training
- Non-hostile environment for Native students in public school off reservation
- Modernized infrastructure

## Cultural Protection and Revitalization

### Breakout Panelists:

**Tim Johnson**, Associate Director for Museum Program, National Museum of the American Indian

**Joe Sarcinella**, Senior Advisor & Liaison for Native American Affairs, Office of the Secretary of Defense, DOD

**Dorothy Lippert**, Repatriation Case Officer, National Museum of Natural History

**Lillian Sparks**, Commissioner of the Administration of Native Americans, HHS

### Breakout Moderator:

**Valerie Hauser**, Director, Office of Native American Affairs, AHCP

### Discussion:

*When I think of cultural protection and revitalization, I think of . . .*

- Low number of fluent language speakers
- Broader ignorance of Native American culture
- Students scared of being proud Native Americans
- Projects that impose/demolish our sacred sites or land
- Diluted “white washed” history exhibits
- The stereotypical Native

*What I would like to see happen is . . .*

#### **Culture**

- Prevent degradation of culture
- Regaining and protecting our sacred sites
- Less ignorance among non-Natives and reduction of people mocking our cultures
- Better Repatriation: Artifacts being returned to tribes and not being sold in auctions
- Increase the number of gathering places
- Federal government sticking to their trust responsibility and not just talking about it

- Being seen as actual people and not as the stereotypical Native American

#### **Education**

- Earlier education on Native Americans
- Better teaching in Native American museums
- Larger Native American presence in history books

#### **Language**

- Next generation speaking their languages fluently
- Rosetta Stone or Native language apps
- Language immersion camps
- Youth wanting to know their language and culture

## Wellness – Mental, Physical, and Social

### Breakout Panelists:

#### Session 1:

**Annina Burns**, Associate Director for Policy, *Let's Move!*

**Anita Fineday**, Managing Director, Indian Child Welfare Programs, Casey Family Programs

**Victor Mendez**, Deputy Secretary of Transportation

#### Session 2:

**Mirtha Beadle**, Director, Office of Tribal Affairs and Policy, SAMHSA

**Rafael Lopez**, Senior Policy Advisor, DPC/OSTP

**Robert McSwain**, Director, Indian Health Service

**Jack Trope**, Casey Family Programs

### Breakout Moderators:

#### Session 1:

**Stacey Ecoffey**, Principal Advisor for Tribal Affairs, HHS

**Hankie Ortiz**, Deputy Director, Office of Indian Services, DOI

#### Session 2:

**Sheldon Spotted Elk**, Director, Indian Child Welfare, Casey Family Programs

### Discussion:

#### *When I think about health and wellness, I think of . . .*

- Substance free
- Youth sobriety powwow
- Staying active in sports and culture
- Support groups
- Physical Education
- Indian Health Care Improvement Act
- Healing from historical trauma

#### *What I would like to see happen is . . .*

- Increased number of college graduates in the health field
- Teach the importance of health at an earlier age
- Spiritual Runs
- Group therapy
- Focus on the importance of prayer
- Active in more cultural activities

## Tribal Justice, Caring for our Youth

### Breakout Panelists:

**Roy Austin**, Deputy Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs, Justice, and Opportunity

**Stuart Delery**, Associate Attorney General, DOJ

**Darren Cruzan**, Deputy BIA Director, Office of Justice Services, DOI

**Mary Lou Leary**, Deputy Director of State, Local, and Tribal Affairs, ONDCP

### Breakout Moderators:

**Bob Listenbee**, Administrator, OJJDP, DOJ

**Tracy Toulou**, Director of the Office of Tribal Justice, DOJ

### Discussion:

#### *When I think about tribal justice I think of . . .*

- Unfair court system
- Corrupt police
- Violence
- Abuse
- Inability to prosecute non-Natives
- No cultural identity
- Bias
- Truancy
- Poaching

#### *What I would like to see . . .*

- Increase the number of people involved in their traditions and culture
- Try to increase and improve the activities in communities (youth council, mentor program, etc.)
- Treatment centers that are culturally geared to Natives and on tribal lands
- Classes for police (cultural sensitivity)
- Better interaction between police and citizens

## Natural Resources and Climate Change

### Breakout Panelists:

#### Session 1:

**Tracey Lebeau**, Director, Western Area Power Administration's Transmission Infrastructure Program, DOE

**Dr. Tawny Mata**, Senior Advisor, Office of the Chief Scientist, USDA

**Stan Meiber**, Deputy Administrator, EPA

**Ali Zaidi**, Associate Director, Natural Resources, Energy, and Science, OMB

#### Session 2:

**Daron Carreiro**, ENRD Indian Resources Section Attorney, DOJ

**Elizabeth Kerttula**, National Ocean Council Director, CEQ

**Rohan Patel**, Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Intergovernmental Affairs

**Bryan Rice**, Director, Forest Management, USDA

### Breakout Moderators:

#### Session 1:

**JoAnn Chase**, Director, American Indian Environmental Office, EPA

**Trent Crable**, Trial Attorney, ENRD, DOJ

#### Session 2:

**Chris Deschene**, Director, Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs, DOE

**Meagan Dunphy-Daly**, Sea Grant Knauss Marine Policy Fellow, NOAA

### Discussion:

#### *When I think about environmental protection and climate change, I think of...*

- Environmental justice
- Cultural protection tied to protecting the environment
- Conservation of natural resources
- Mining/fracking concerns
- Curb pollution
- Changing weather patterns
- Poor air and water quality
- Fighting for water rights
- Preservation of homelands
- Address invasive species that affect natural species, like fish farming
- Ground erosion causing houses to fall into ocean/river
- Transportation concerns (public transit)
- Declines in hunting and fishing habitat, and in historic fish and game harvests

#### *What I would like to see happen is...*

- Drought mitigation, habitat protection
- Better wildlife protection
- Balance of reservation needs and energy needs
- Having eco-friendly communities
- Agriculture communities
- Carbon sequestration projects
- Limiting access to our sacred sights
- More respect for animals and their habitats

- Educating our youth about natural resources

## **Economic Change Starts with Me**

### **Breakout Panelists:**

**Nathan Segal**, Assistant Administrator,  
Office of Native American Affairs, SBA

**Elaine Buckberg**, Deputy Assistant  
Secretary for Policy Coordination,  
Treasury

**Tameka Montgomery**, Associate  
Administrator of the Office of  
Entrepreneurial Development, SBA

### **Discussion:**

#### ***When I think of economic development, I think of...***

- Poor economic development leads to poverty and community members turning to drugs and alcohol
- Agriculture
- Casinos
- Small businesses
- Community revenue

#### ***What I would like to see happen is...***

- Increased investments with personal funds
- Increased investments in small community member owned businesses
- Increased employment in locally owned businesses
- Smarter investments with tribal funds

## Tribal Sovereignty – What is it today?

### Breakout Panelists:

**Jerry Abramson**, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs

**Jacqueline Pata**, Executive Director, NCAI

**Karen Diver**, Chairwoman, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

**Kevin Washburn**, Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, DOI

### Breakout Moderators:

**Rebecca Naragon**, Program Specialist, IEED, DOI

**Tricia Tingle**, Associate Director, Office of Tribal Justice Support, DOI

### Discussion:

#### *When I think of tribal sovereignty, I think of...*

- Additional Generation Indigenous programs to increase awareness
- Tribal communities are not taken seriously
- Tribes need to provide for their own communities and not be so dependent on others

#### *What I would like to see happen is...*

- Increased opportunities to teach about tribal sovereignty
- Get involved in tribal government, raise your voice
- Increasing the number of tribally-run law enforcement departments to help with public safety
- Sovereignty = Power (we are the only ones who can create change)
- Move away from U.S. Government structure and create our own.